Supporting Parents with Psychiatric Disabilities and Promoting Recovery: An International Challenge

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Introduction

Parenting is a significant life role for adults with psychiatric disabilities. Success in this role is a mutual life goal for many, functioning as well as possible or to some extent is intimately related to the recovery process & successful functioning in other major life domains. Research on the prevalence & needs of parents with psychiatric disabilities in two countries, the U.S. & The Netherlands, provides the framework for developing & testing interventions. Essential program components include supports for parents in managing their children's needs as well as managing their own.

Generic Parenting Challenges

• Housing
• Employment
• Money management
• Transportation
• Health care

Challenges Specific to Parents with Mental Illness

• Stigma & misconceptions re: mental illness
• Medications
• Hospitalization
• Relationships & linkages
• Advocacy for self & children
• Child's perception of parent's illness
• Communication with child

What “works” for families living with parental mental illnesses?

Interventions that are:

1. Needs related to disabilities
2. Evidence-based and trauma-informed
3. Strengths-Based
4. Non-judgmental approach
5. Support of parents in child and adult roles
6. Trauma-informed
7. Safe environment
8. Trustworthily, dependable relationships

Providers partner with parents to:

• Increase self-awareness
• Increase knowledge & awareness of children as unique individuals
• Change thoughts & attitudes
• Develop skills & competencies
• Develop relationships & supports
• Resilience success

Goal:

To create opportunities for people to have success, to be successful, to develop the positive sense of self necessary to change the conditions of their lives.

Comparing the U.S. & The Netherlands

• United States — 290 million inhabitants
• The Netherlands — 16 million inhabitants

Research & Program Development in The Netherlands

What are the needs of parents with psychiatric disabilities?

Identified Needs

• All have contact with mental health institutions
• 94% are satisfied with the quantity of care
• Half have different help around (parent/family)
• Support in the relationship with the child
• Starting a conversation about one’s problems
• Educational & legal support
• Needs related to disabilities
• Handling documentation & stigma for the child
• Support with assessing life of possibilities

Background Characteristics of Parents Surveyed (n = 47)

• Living in community
• Numerous single parents
• Low income/stress to meet day-to-day needs
• High burden of care

Recommendations

• Provide programs for parents in all kinds of settings
• Increase communication & ease of problems with children
• Make a plan for the support of children whose psychiatric problems increase
• Organize small meeting groups for parents

Program Essentials

• Giving emotional support & warmth
• Stimulating the development of the child
• Listening to the needs of the child
• Organizing & guiding activities
• Teaching abilities to the child
• Meeting needs
• Making social contacts
• Balancing parental and own needs
• Improving communication with the child

Program Characteristics

• Based on Psychiatric Rehabilitation (Boston – Approach)
• The (Choose-Get) Keep model
• Consumer & provider in individual meetings or parents in groups
• Some components are self-help
• Self-control

Needs Assessment & Descriptive Research

What “works” for families

Parenting with Success & Satisfaction

A research based program for parents with psychiatric disabilities

Marnie Nederkirk & Peter van der Ende

Evaluation Research: Testing Interventions

U.S. National Household Survey: Prevalence of Parented

A Common Path & Shared Vision

Program Development & Piloting

Training for Providers

“With what am I satisfied & where am I”

I. “Current functioning in the parent role”

Who am I & who is my child?

Choose for solutions

Who am I & who is my child?

Who is my child?

II. “Strengthen the parent role”

What do I want to do for my child?

Who has demands & what kind?

What are my goals & what is required of the parent?

Who am I?

II. “Take back the parent role”

I’ve handled this before. I’ve been through it.

Who am I & who is my child?

Who has demands & what kind?

What are my goals & what is required of the parent?

Who am I?

Contact Information

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"You have to go to work. You gotta’ come home. You gotta’ deal with the kids, deal with your own house. Your own problems, you know, really one on one."

"My children gave me strength, they gave me hope. they give me the will to survive…"